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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0283
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1828
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2680
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 4563
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KARACHI 000094

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SINDH - PROVINCIAL DEPUTY SPEAKER UNHAPPY ABOUT
RESTORATION OF CHAUDHRY

REF: KARACHI 81

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY ACTING CONSUL GENERAL CATHERINE RODRIGUEZ
FOR REASONS 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: On March 17, Sindh Provincial Assembly Deputy Speaker Shehla Raza, a member of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), told the Acting Consul General (ACG) that civil unrest forced her party to accept the reinstatement of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry. According to her, the prior Chief Justice planned to retire and the GOP already had a succession plan for him. Raza explained the PPP position that Sherry Rehman stepped down as federal Minister of Information because she had mishandled a public information strategy that would have diffused Nawaz Sharif's plans to force restoration of Chaudhry. While upset over recent events, she declared that the PPP felt it had no choice but to accept the reinstatement. She also told the ACG that she expected the Sindh Minister of Information would soon be replaced. End summary.

PPP Claims It Intended to Replace Chief Justice Anyway

¶2. (C) Sindh Provincial Assembly Deputy Speaker Shehla Raza told Acting Consul General (ACG) on March 17 that her party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), had no choice but to restore former Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry due to the civil unrest caused by Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N). She opined that the correct way should to do this would have been through a constitutional amendment. Raza noted that the GOP already had plans to replace current Chief Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar after he retired on March 21.

Dissatisfaction with Choice of Chaudhry

¶3. (C) Raza explained that Benzair Bhutto initially supported restoration of Pakistan's deposed judiciary, until Chaudhry released the perpetrators of the Red Mosque incident. By December 2008, she said, Bhutto and her party had decided against supporting his reinstatement.

¶4. (C) Raza is personally against Chaudhry's reinstatement because she does not feel that he is impartial. She claimed that Sharif has told many that the only trustworthy person in the judicial system is Chaudhry. She believed that Sharif will not accept any judgment concerning his eligibility to hold public office which he does not view as favorable.

15. (C) When asked whether Zardari's decision will cause a rift in the PPP, she said that while she thought many party members were unhappy with his decision - including her - they will to continue to outwardly support the decision. She opined that Zardari had no choice because Nawaz pushed his hand.

Changes Within the PPP

16. (C) Raza spoke at length about the resignation of Sindh PPP General Secretary Nafis Siddiqui (reftel). While the media reported that he resigned because he was passed over for a Senate seat, Raza explained that Zardari was unsure if he could trust him because he has been affiliated with numerous political parties over the years. She added that many other prominent people also wanted Senate seats. Raza added that Kazi Asad, brother of Fehmida Mirza (Speaker of the National Assembly) and managing director of the Ibrat group of newspapers, was also denied a Senate seat.

17. (C) She said Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister of Information, resigned under pressure from Zardari because she mishandled a press release detailing the GOP's plan to replace retiring Chief Justice Dogar. Because if this, PPP party members blamed her for giving Sharif an opportunity to take advantage of this situation. Raza pointed out that Rehman remains PPP's Central Information Secretary.

18. (C) Raza predicted that the Sindh provincial government will soon replace Minister of Information Shazia Marri (PPP).

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Raza added that Marri isn't very popular within the party and has been playing favorites. Moreover, Raza claimed, she has spent more time traveling than performing her duty as Information Minister.

Comment

19. (C) While PML-N does not have a significant constituency in Sindh, Raza feels that her party bungled the recent controversy over restoration of the judiciary and allowed the PML-N to gain a decisive public opinion victory that could hurt her party nationally. Raza supported inclusion of long-time party members into the PPP's hierarchy. She is a veteran member of the PPP and voiced her strong belief that party workers should have an opportunity to move up the ranks. She noted that she was a PPP worker for 14 years before she was ever given a position with the party. Post notes that her speculations about the resignations of Sherry Rehman and about other party officials are pure and unsubstantiated gossip, interesting only because they reflect rifts within the PPP.

RODRIGUEZ